



Supporting families of
children with disabilities or
special health needs in Arizona

Parent & Professional Collaboration



Mission Statement

To support and encourage families on the
challenging journey of raising children with
disabilities and special health needs.



Parent Training and Information Center Raising Special Kids

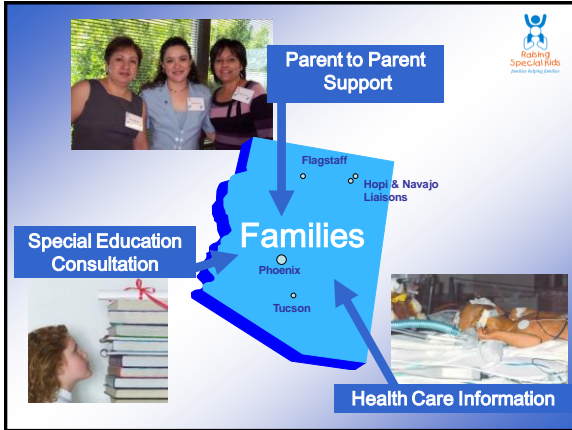


Arizona's Parent Training & Information Center (PTI)

provides special education training and assistance to
families of children with the full range of disabilities.

PTI centers were created under Part D of the Individuals
with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Every state has a PTI funded through the U.S. Department
of Education, Office of Special Education Programs




Our Services

- Statewide
- Available in Spanish
- Support families of diverse culture, and background



The 'Raising Special Kids' logo is in the top right corner.

Bianca



The 'Raising Special Kids' logo is in the top right corner.

Vicky Rozich's Family Story



Learning Objectives



- Understand the role of parents in special education
- Encourage family participation in education
- Improve ability to advocate/ self advocate
- Describe the role of school staff in special education
- Provide strategies to foster positive interactions with professionals, school staff, and students

Definition of Collaboration



Collaboration:

A commitment to work together to address a problem and achieve a goal that could not be accomplished by working individually.

(Mattessich et al., 2004)



Parents of Children with Special Needs



- Constantly adjust and adapt to changes in their child's health or abilities
- Look at the child's disability through the lens of culture and experience
- Interact with many professionals and specialists
- Must learn different systems of care and how they operate
- Continually need information services and support



Where Does Collaboration Happen?



- In your home
- In your extended family
- In your neighborhood
- In your school
- In your job
- In your doctor's office
- In extracurricular activities



Navigating Systems



- Transition planning for IEP and Graduation
- Power of attorney for health care or finances
- Guardianship or other options- age 18
- Post secondary education
- Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment
- Housing Options
- Social Security benefits
- Transportation
- Community integration



Parents can feel overwhelmed again

Why is Collaboration Needed?



- IDEA requires decision-making in special education by a team of school staff and parents
- Children have multiple needs that require coordination with many services and (Teachers, O.T., P.T., Speech Therapy, Behavior specialist, Nurse, AT, Transportation)
- Parents know their child **best** and have valuable information and insights



Why is Collaboration Needed?



- Parent's rights and responsibilities in special education require their participation in a team
- When parents are part of a decision-making team, they are more likely to support the goals
- Children develop skills and confidence when there is **consistency** between home and school



Why is Collaboration Needed?



What are some good practical ideas?

- (Story) Bianca and "glasses"
- Show and Tell
- Camera at "Meet the teacher Night"
- Self assessment questionnaire completed by parent AND child- compare
- Cover letter of 'who am I and what works best for me' at the IEP to give to each teacher

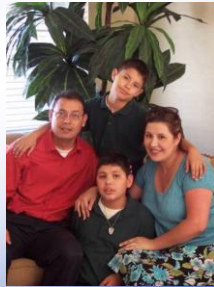


Respect, Trust, and Communication

Parents know their child best



- How the child is likely to respond in different situations
- The child's strengths & needs
- The child's likes and dislikes
- What is working and practical examples for helping the child
- What has not worked and why
- The importance of having professionals as allies to achieve the best results



Respect, Trust, and Communication



Professionals know



- How children's health, growth, development, and education might be affected by the challenges they face
- Community services/programs to assist the child and family
- How the family can receive services from agencies and providers
- Evidence-based practices that have helped other children
- The importance of working with parents to achieve the best results

Results of Collaboration



- Shared Ownership
- Sharing Responsibility
- Shared Success



Improving the quality of life and the health of children with special health needs and their families requires the collective knowledge, skills, experience, and expertise of all family members and professionals

Family Professional Collaboration for Children with Special Health Needs and Their Families (1993)

What can teachers and staff do to foster a collaborative relationship?



- Messages, emails with praise or encouragement about the child
- Ask for strategies or help if behaviors are impeding progress in class
- Tell parents about resources (like Raising Special Kids) for information and support
- Use active listening skills
- Show patience and understanding



What would hinder this process?



- Parent unable to accept or adjust to the child's disability
- Age of child
- Fear of being judged
- Lack of communication or relationship-building skills
- Parent brings *baggage* of prior school experiences



What else would hinder this process?



When issues occur at IEP/ MET meetings

- (Examples) completed IEP handed across table to sign
- 30 minute meetings
- No drafts issued in advance
- Staff not staying for parent input and suggestions – no one taking notes
- Only negative comments about child

Parents' Perspective



Common Reactions of Parents:

- Denial
- Anger
- Fear
- Guilt
- Confusion
- Powerlessness
- Disappointment
- Rejection

***Not all parents go through these reactions or experience them sequentially. They might occur repeatedly at turning points such as initial identification, school entry age, adolescence, leaving school and when parents grow older. (McGill Smith 1997)*

Meetings



Let parents know:

- WHO will be attending
- WHAT will be discussed
- WHY the meeting is held
- WHERE the meeting will be
- WHEN the meeting will be and how long it will last
- OFFER to answer questions or meet with them before larger meetings



Relaying Sensitive Information



- Use the student's name
- Use "people-first" language
- Balance between realism and hope
- Take enough time to give examples of how interventions can help the child develop
- Have specific, documented information
- Offer resources for family support such as Raising Special Kids
- Arrange a follow-up meeting if needed



Being Prepared: Record Keeping



- Maintain communication with the school (i.e. logs)
- Keep contacts in easy to find locations and formats (phone #s, e-mail, address, staff directories)
- Keep permanent records in a safe location (birth certificate, medical records, social security card, verification of disability)



Being Prepared: Record Keeping



- Note important dates on calendar & check often
- Save and read the documents the school gives you (evaluations, IEPs, progress reports, Prior Written Notices, rights)
- Make and keep copies of formal requests you give to the school



Parents as Advocates



- Attend self-advocacy training
- Skill Development and Leadership (Partners in Policy Making)
- Informing parents of important issues and how it effects their child
- Serving on advisory boards or school-based committees (Special Education Parent Advisory Council)
- PTA
- Presentation at Board Meeting



Forms of Family Involvement



- Parent Advisory Committees
- PTA/PTO or parent support groups
- Scheduled meetings with school staff
- Parent-teacher conferences/meet your teacher nights
- School-sponsored events targeted to parents
- Fund-raising events
- Athletic events
- Student performances
- Potluck dinners



Family Involvement



Informal Involvement (Communication with family):

- Newsletters
- Phone trees
- Surveys
- Home visits
- Teacher-parent communication (logs, e-mail, phone calls)
- Field trips
- Parent volunteers
- Resource centers/parent corners
- Help with homework
- Parent-school hotline or answering machine
- Web sites



Summary

for parent/professional collaboration:



- Meet parents "where they are"
- Actively LISTEN to the needs parents express
- Recognize parents as first teachers
- Acknowledge parents as experts on their child
- Respect values and culture
- Use a variety of communication avenues
- Commend parents for their efforts
- Offer resources to help parents (e.g. refer to RSK)



Special Education Services



Raising Special Kids is Arizona's Parent and Training Information Center.

- IEP Partners, Training and Individual Consultation on IEPs, 504 Plans and Transition
- Training for teachers and students in special education programs



Training Topics



- Organizing Your Records
- Individual Education Plan (IEP)
- Section 504
- Evaluation and Assessment
- Transition from AzEIP to Preschool
- Transition from High School
- Journey to Adulthood
- Getting and Keeping the First Job
- Parents as Advocates
- Guardianship and Legal Options
- Parent & Professional Collaboration
- Bully-Free Environments



Resources for Parents



- **Raising Special Kids**
(800) 237-3007 or 602-242-4366
www.raisingpecialkids.org
- **Parent Information Network (PINS) ADE**
<http://www.ade.az.gov/ess/das/pinspals>
(877) 230-PINS
- **NICHCY** (National Information Center for children & Youth with Disabilities) www.nichcy.org
- **Technical Assistance ALLIANCE** for parent centers
www.taalliance.org

Resources for Parents



- Arizona Center for Disability Law
www.acdl.com (self-advocacy guides)
- Families and Advocates Partnership for Education
www.fape.org
- CADRE (Consortium for Appropriate Dispute Resolution in Special Education)
<http://www.directionservice.org/cadre/>
- National Center on Secondary Education and Transition
www.ncset.org

How to refer a family to Raising Special Kids



- Obtain consent from the family
- Send or Fax copy of referral form signed by family
Raising Special Kids contacts the family member within 48 hours with support, training, and information
- For Parent to Parent connections, a mentor parent provides one to one assistance for a period of 8 weeks.
- Referral forms available on the website www.raisingpecialkids.org
- Or call 602-242-4366 or 800-237-3007



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Thank you for completing the evaluation!
